

# Civil War Letters

## Between Alexander O'Briant and his wife, Emily Mary Whitfield O'Briant

Alexander and Emily O'Briant were the parents of Martha Elizabeth O'Briant who married Alias Jasper Harris. Alexander joined Co. A, North Carolina Infantry, Confederate Troops in May of 1862. After training less than two months at Camp Mangum, current site of Meredith College in Raleigh, the 50th was sent to fight between Petersburg and Richmond, Virginia. Soon they were in major battles including Drewry's Bluff and White Oak Swamp. Parham, Alexander's brother, was killed there July 1. The unit was sent to eastern N.C. for over two years and then to Savannah to stop General Sherman's march. The letters span three years. Remarkably Emily and Alexander survived. Seventy pages of Alexander's estate papers are in the N.C. Archives in Raleigh and offer a glimpse into their lives after the war. William Gaston Whitfield, Emily's brother, moved to Tennessee prior to the War and saw lots of action with the Alabama 35th, including the Peach Orchard at Gettysburg. John Dolphin Harris, father of Alias Jasper Harris, was also in the 50th.

About eighty years after they were written, the letters were discovered by Thomas Lester O'Briant in the attic of the O'Briant homeplace near Mt. Tirzah, North Carolina and were transcribed by him. Thomas' grandson, Tom Orr of Hendersonville, made a copy available to me. At this time, the family is searching for the original letters.

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